

XIII. SUPPORT SERVICES, ACCOUNTING, BUDGET & FISCAL SURETY

A. PROFILE

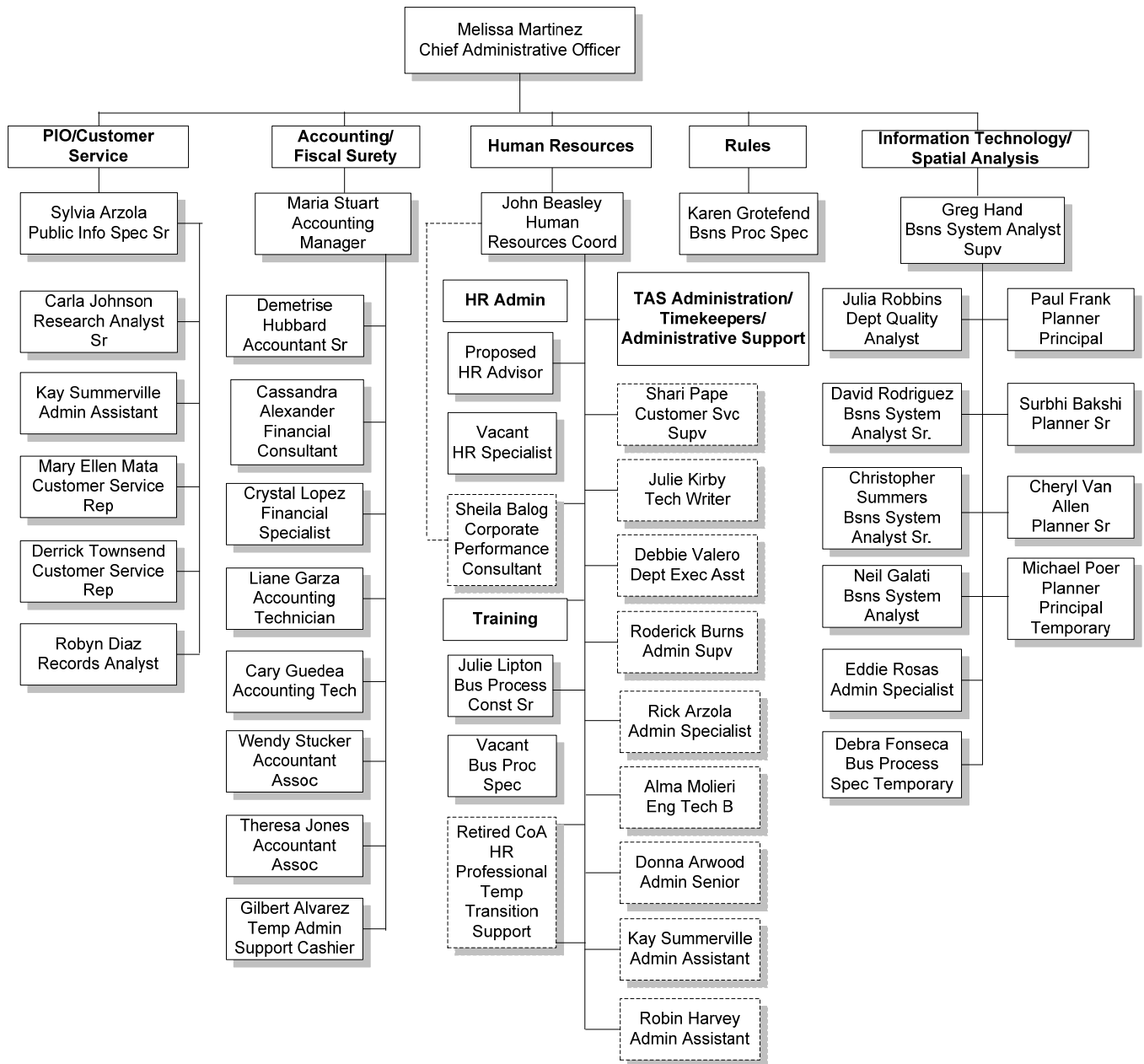
Authority

Support Services carries out the City and PDRD's policies for Accounting, Human Resources, Information Technology, Public Information and Rules.

Organization

The organization for the Support Services/Accounting & Fiscal Surety is shown in Figure 40. The staff and functions are listed in Table 73. These may not match the current staffing but were accurate at the time we did our research. There are 36 budgeted positions. The positions shown in dashed boxes are located in other Divisions and assist in payroll or related issues.

Figure 40
Organization Of Support Services/Accounting & Fiscal Surety Division



Staffing

Table 73
Staff And Functions For The Support Services/Accounting & Fiscal Surety Division

Position Title	Number of Positions	Responsibilities	Reports To
Chief Administrative Officer	1	Manages the Support Services Division	Assistant Director
ACCOUNTING/FISCAL SECURITY			
Accounting Manager	1	Manages the Accounting/Fiscal Surety function	Chief Administrative Officer
Accountant Sr	1	CAMPO, CIP, Grants, Fee Study	Accounting Manager
Financial Consultant	1	Escrow accounts, inventory, and other financial transactions.	Accounting Manager
Financial Specialist	1	Handles accounts payable and a variety of administrative functions.	Accounting Manager
Accounting Technician	1	Handles cash receipts and credit card reconciliations.	Accounting Manager
Accounting Technician	1	CR creation for cashier and permit center, office supplies, phone bills and other related functions	Accounting Manager
Accountant Assoc	1	Escrow refunds, Draw letters, fiscal database	Accounting Manager
Accountant Assoc	1	Escrow arrangements and construction agreements	Accounting Manager
Temp Admin Support, Cashier	1	Cashier support	Accounting Manager
HUMAN RESOURCES			
Human Resources Coord	1	Manages the Human Resources function	Chief Administrative Officer
HR Advisor, Proposed	1	Work on training program	Human Resources Coord
HR Specialist	1	Assists with HR issues	Human Resources Coord
Corporate Performance Consultant	1	Position managed by HRD/OD but PDRD coordinates special assignments and projects, helps design and hold public meetings. Conducts manager and supervisor coaching.	Human Resources Coord
Timekeepers/Administrative Support	9 (other Divisions)	These staff work in other PDRD Divisions but assist in timekeeping	Human Resources Coord
Training			

Bus Process Const Sr	1	Working on new training program	Chief Administrative Officer
Bus Proc Spec	1	Working on new training program	Chief Administrative Officer
CoA HR	1	Temporary transition support	Chief Administrative Officer
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY/SPACTIAL ANALYSIS (see Technology Chapter)			
Bsns System Analyst Supv	1	Manages the Information Technology/Spatial Analysis Section	Chief Administrative Officer
Dept Quality Analyst	1		Bsns System Analyst Supv
Bsns System Analyst Sr.	3		Bsns System Analyst Supv
Admin Specialist	1		Bsns System Analyst Supv
Bus Process Spec, Temporary	1		Bsns System Analyst Supv
Planner Principal	1		Bsns System Analyst Supv
Planner Sr	2		Bsns System Analyst Supv
Planner Principal, Temporary	1		Bsns System Analyst Supv
PIO/CUSTOMER SERVICE			
Public Information Specialist	1	Manages the PIO/Customer Service function	Chief Administrative Officer
Research Analyst Sr	1	Processes items for City Council, coordinated Council Directives, public information requests.	Public Information Specialist
Admin Assistant	1	The position handles the front reception desk on the 5 th floor, answers the phone, sorts and distributes mail, schedules 4 conference rooms, monitors copiers for paper and toner.	Public Information Specialist
Customer Service Rep	2	Handle incoming phone calls and incoming calls for Austin Energy	Public Information Specialist
Records Analyst	1	Handles the records management program for the entire Department. as well at the Rules For PDRD.	Public Information Specialist
RULES			
Bsns Proc Spec	1	Handles the up-dating and processes for the Rules	Chief Administrative Officer
TOTAL	36		

B. POSITIVE FINDINGS

- The new Chief Administrative Officer has taken an aggressive approach to organizing the Departments support functions;
- New forms created for Travel, Business Expense, and Purchases;
- Reasonable accounting systems are in place;
- The beginning of an employee training program; and
- Good IT function.

C. ISSUES FOR THE ENTIRE SUPPORT SERVICES DIVISION

Budget and Finance

Beginning in May 2014 Budget and Finance was separated into two job functions. A Financial Manager reports to the Director while the Accounting Manager handles daily administration and monitoring of the funding approved by Council. In the past the budget has been too closely controlled by the Director and Budget Officer After consultation with the Assistant Directors. We believe that a better approach would be to have all of the Departments administrative functions, including the budget report to a Chief Administrative Officer with broader involvement by operating managers.

355. *Recommendation:* All budget and accounting functions should report to the Chief Administrative Officer.

Also, see discussions in Chapter III concerning the budget and fees.

Conference Rooms

With the increased use of technology it would be helpful to equip all the conference rooms with smart board.

356. *Recommendation:* Equip the conference rooms with smart boards.

Maintenance

The offices need some brushing up with paint and in some cases new carpet.

357. *Recommendation:* Update offices with paint and carpets.

Parking

We received comments from Stakeholder complaining that the parking lot in front of the building often has many City vehicles parked. It is also possible that some employees may park in this lot. Although there is a multi-story parking garage available for both staff and customers, the prime spaces on the surface lot should be set aside for customers. Although PDRD is not the only tenant in the building, it should take the lead in working with other tenants in relation to parking.

358. *Recommendation:* PDRD should take the lead so that neither City staff nor City vehicles are parked in the surface lot outside the building.

Performance Measures

The City budget document includes the City-wide performance measures shown in Table 74.

Table 74
Performance Measures For Support Services

	2011	2012	2013	2014*	2015
FTEs	20	23	28	33	36
Average annual carbon footprint	883	811	741	704	669
Employee turnover rate	2.36	6.69	6.39	5	6.4
Lost time injury rate per 100 employees	0	1.46	.35	0	0
Sick leave hours used per 1,000 hours	34.21	33.61	33.26	34	34

The City-wide performance measures should be used as a guide to provide similar measures for Support Services. They can be improved as follows:

- Add a description of how the carbon footprint is developed and what if anything PDRD can do to reduce it;
- Describe lost time injury and specify what the numbers mean;
- Describe if sick leave hours are an average and also include a mean; and
- Add a category for training hours.

359. *Recommendation:* Modify performance measures for Support Services as outlined above.

Vehicles

Vehicles for PDRD are handled by the Cities Fleet Services Department. We did not receive many complaints from staff but did note in our review of Site/Subdivision Inspection a few vehicles that are beyond the need for replacement. In FY 2014 there were 10 new vehicles added to PDRD and 12 replacement vehicles. For FY 2015 there will be 8 replacement vehicles, 3 for Site/Subdivisions and 5 for Building. The Building Inspectors normally prefer the Equinox with a price of \$20,900. Site/Subdivision prefer the Ford 150 at a cost of \$18,046. It appears that Fleet Services pays for replacement vehicles and PDRD for additional new vehicles.

Lacking a full analysis of the entire PDRD fleet it is not possible to make additional recommendations. However, based on information we do have, it appears the fleet is in acceptable condition. We will use the cost items as needed for vehicles for new positions.

D. ACCOUNTING/FISCAL SURETY

CAMPO

CAMPO is a separate non-City of Austin agency that provides a regional transportation function. PDRD is not directly involved in this function but serves as a fiscal agent. PDRD is paid \$155,000 per year for indirect costs reimbursement. \$135,000 is an expense refund to PDRD in unit 6200 Annexation and \$20,000 is recorded in revenue on unit 9100 PDRD Revenue.

360. *Recommendation:* The PDRD annual revenue should indicate specifics related to CAMPO revenue.

Cashier Function

There are two position for the Department's cashier function. One of these has been held vacant with the thought that it may not be needed once Internet plans are received along with credit cards. However, in the interim there have been times when there is need for a second cashier. Back-up support has been provided but this has not always been sufficient and when there is a call for backup, there have been times

when it is not available. This is part of the problem of employees not answering their phones.

The cashiering function should be a relatively straight forward function that does not result in long lines for service. However, many of the documents prepared by other staff are missing key data required to process the case. As such, the cashier must take extra time to complete missing data. Another issue is the location of the cashier function which is in the Permit Center away from direct supervision. While the Accounting Manager needs to provide accounting oversight to the function, it may be more appropriate to have direct daily supervision by the manager of the Permit Center.

In a previous chapter we recommended that the cashier should report to the Permit manager.

361. *Recommendation:* The Accounting Manager should conduct a review of the cashier function and develop an approach to provide needed backup to the cashier function.

362. *Recommendation:* The Accounting Manager should monitor the impact of the new credit card system.

Fiscal Surety

One Accountant Associate spends full time managing the Fiscal Surety. Surety is used for **Parkland** (must be posted prior to subdivision plat approval by the Planning Commission), **Site Development** (prior to issuance of a development permit), **Subdivisions** (within 90 days after plat approval by the Planning Commission), and **Transportation** projects (required in association with zoning changes or site plans).

Surety can be supplied by Letters of Credit, an Escrow Account, or an Insurance Bond. Some accounts have been held for as many as 26 years. The problem may occur when construction is desired as the amount of the Surety may not be sufficient to cover construction. It would be useful to conduct a review of all existing Surety to develop a strategy for possible changes in the program. There have been several law suits concerning release of Surety and there is need for a clear procedures manual.

363. *Recommendation:* The Accounting/Fiscal Surety section along with relevant construction functions should undertake a review of the Surety system.

Management

There are 9 direct reports in the Accounting/Fiscal Surety function which is manageable. The entire group has a staff meeting once a month and the four accountants also have another meeting once a month. Staff has expressed some concerns that job descriptions may be re-written to fit certain staff and that the hiring and job placement functions are not clear. While many of the staff are well trained with related degrees, assignments have been at a level below what could be expected. It was not appropriate for us to examine this issue in detail but we have noted the issue in the section on Human Resources, hiring, and promotions. As with other PDRD staff some of these positions require continuing education credits which has a cost implication. This issue is covered in the HR section of this report.

If the Financial Manager position reports to the Chief Administrative Officer as recommended, the Accounting Manager would report to the Financial Manager.

364. *Recommendation: The Accounting Manager should report to the Financial Manager*

Staffing

A third Financial Consultant position has been added to the Department and this position will be shared with the Budget Officer and the Accounting Manager. This arrangement could change if the Budget Officer reports to the Chief Administrative Officer as recommended elsewhere in this report. As discussed under Management above, consideration should be given to possible use of existing staff for this position.

Tree Mitigation Fees

Two staff handle the tree mitigation fund. This fund is kept outside the General Fund and is separate from the PDRD budget. However, two PDRD staff are funded out of this budget. The ending Fund balance as of 8/31/2014 was \$2,312,801. For FY 14 the revenue was \$576,892 with expenses of \$338,337. The Finance Department authorizes spending from the fund and it has a current balance of \$120,000. Once the One-Stop-Shop operates out of a separate account from the General Fund, the reimbursements from the Tree Mitigation Fees should be clearly identified in the budget.

365. *Recommendation: The Tree Mitigation fees should be clearly identified in the PDRD budget.*

E. HUMAN RESOURCES COORDINATION SECTION

Billable Hours

For staffing analysis, it is generally useful to calculate employee billable hours as shown in Table 5. Since few staff are productive 100% of the time and there is often slippage in calculating actual work tasks, we normally use 80% of net hours. Vacation time varies from 4.34 for employees less than five years employment to a high of 7.67 for more than 20 years. For Austin these calculations result in 1322 productive hours per employee. Once more detailed data is collected for actual employee hours per activity, this data can be used for productivity analysis.

Table 75
Austin Billable Hours

Item	Days7	Annual Hours
Business days	8 hrs. per day, 7:45 to 4:45	2080
Holidays	12 days	96 hrs.
Vacation	5.34 hrs. per 24 periods, based on 5 to 10 yrs. employment	125 hrs.
Sick Leave	4 hrs. per 24 periods	96 hrs*.
Net Hours		1763
Break Time	two 15 min. per day	110
Second Net		1653
Productive Time	80% of Second Net	1322

*The actual average appears to be 71 hours.

Career Ladders

Many PDRD staff have commented about the lack of a clear opportunity or guidelines for advancement to higher level positions. Some division managers have attempted to adjust or work around in order to provide opportunities for their subordinate staff, but the adjustments or work around arrangements still don't address the basic problem.

We have pointed out that there are a significant number of employees in PDRD that are approaching retirement. While at the present time the low turnover rate in some Divisions is a positive fact, we have a concern that the near future will suddenly leave some divisions with a loss of experience and history, and more importantly lack of trained key staff to move up to higher levels of supervision and management. We have not analyzed this plan in any detail, however it appears to set a framework for opening opportunities for advancement for employees who endeavor to acquire additional skills and experience. Training and opportunities for staff to gain the

additional skills and knowledge is a critical factor. We have also previously recommended that PDRD expand its budget and time allowance for increased training for staff.

366. ***Recommendation:*** PDRD should work with Corporate HR for the development and adoption of a definitive career advancement plans for all PDRD staff.

Certifications and Professional Fees

It appears that some Divisions or positions pay for professional fees, certifications, and required continuing education requirements and other Divisions do not. Some certifications require continuing education credits. The budget for FY 2014-15 shown in Table 45 indicates \$12,600 for Professional Registrations and \$6,960 for Memberships. PDRD should undertake a detailed review of the various Professional Registrations and Memberships to arrive at an appropriate number for the 2015-16 budget. We generally support that a large number of such costs be covered by the Department. Some communities also use a shared approach where the community pays half and the employee pays half. As an interim step, we suggest an additional \$15,000 be added to this year's budget for certifications.

As part of this study we noted the following items that should be covered (partial list only):

Table 76
Needed PDRD Professional Registrations or Memberships

Item	Amount	Total
Licensed Architect in Urban Design	\$305	\$305
American Institute of Certified Planners (inc.APA) *	\$415 x 10	\$4,150
American Planning Association*	\$245 x 10	\$2,450
Congress for New Urbanism (CNU)	\$195 X 3	\$585
Energy Plans Examiner Certification	\$200	\$200
National Trust for Historic Preservation	\$195	\$195
PE License	\$215	\$215
State Master HVAC Licenses	\$100	\$100
State Master HVAC Licenses renewal	\$55	\$55
Urban Land Institute (ULI)	\$430 x 5	\$2,150
Total		\$10,405

*Varies by salary level

367. **Recommendation:** PDRD should undertake a detailed review of the various Professional Registrations and Memberships to arrive at an appropriate number for the 2015-16 budget.

368. **Recommendation:** This year's budget should add an additional \$30,000 for certifications.

Conflict of Interest

We received some confidential information that some staff may be confused about conflict of interest as related to outside employment. Conflict of interest can be very troublesome in a function like PDRD. The City has a clear policy that says:

“All City employees are prohibited from engaging in other employment, which would interfere with the performance of their City duties and are prohibited from engaging in other employment, which would represent a conflict of interest.”

In addition to the City-wide policy, the Building Inspection function within PDRD has a conflict of interest policy. PDRD should prepare and circulate a clear policy on Conflict of Interest and outside employment and address any conflict of interest issues on a timely basis for all PDRD functions.

369. *Recommendation:* PDRD should prepare and circulate to staff a clear policy on Conflict of Interest and outside employment.

370. *Recommendation:* PDRD managers should address any possible conflict of interest issues on a timely basis.

Employee Evaluations

PDRD participates in the city-wide employee evaluation system. An extensive 14 page evaluation system is used that results in 5 rankings; Unsatisfactory Performance, Performance Needs Improvement, Successful Performance, Commendable Performance, and Outstanding Performance. It includes both a mid-year and year-end rating. We were told that the system is used for all employees but did not obtain any independent verification of 100% application or effectiveness of the reviews. We did see what appears to be the need for more extensive manager, supervisor, and employee training and evaluation within PDRD.

Interviews with both employees and supervisors revealed that the current program to provide staff with performance evaluations every six months has proven to be of little value to the organization or the employee. Many supervisors and employees believe that the sole purpose of the performance evaluation program was to quantify the amount of salary increase the employee will receive. Since the correlation between Performance Evaluations and merit increases has been suspended many employees feel there is no benefits to be achieved by continuing the program.

We believe there are at least two main reasons for establishing an effective performance evaluation program. Performance Evaluations provide both the

supervisor and the employee with an opportunity to map out future performance expectations. First, the performance evaluations should reflect the results observed during the periodic field or staff auditing program and outline those measures that should be taken to further improve performance. These evaluations can also be used to help communicate to the employee what steps they should pursue in the future to prepare them for career advancement within the organization. Second, with the more vigorous implementation of the Civil Service Rules, the existence of accurate and comprehensive employee performance evaluations will play a critical role in the process of determining if disciplinary action is warranted.

Employee Orientation

The City HR function has a two day new employee orientation program that includes ethics, defensive driving and other City issues. PDRD has not had a department program but such a program is being worked on. Given the nature of PDRD, it is particularly important that new employee orientation include extensive discussion of the Department's mission, goals and direction.

371. *Recommendation:* PRDR should develop a new employee orientation program.

Hiring and Promotions

The HR Coordinator indicates that a transparent hiring and promotion process has been used within PDRD that is similar to that which will be required under the new Civil Service Rules. However, in our staff interviews and questionnaires there is considerable concern about both the transparency and processes being used. Some staff feel that other staff that have a "legacy" background are being given preferential treatment. We were not able to examine this situation in detail but suggest that HR do a better job of showing transparency to the system. It would also be useful to circulate a memo detailing the process for both hiring and promotions.

372. *Recommendation:* HR staff should improve communication of the hiring and promotion processes.

There has been concern about the length of time it takes fill vacant positions. While some of the problem may relate to the City's central HR function, it appears that some of the problem may also exist within PDRD. It may be that some of the problem rests

with the hiring supervisors in not preparing requests as soon as a vacancy is announced. Each job must be posted a minimum of 7 days.

373. *Recommendation:* **PDRD HR staff should conduct a training session for supervisors and managers on the hiring process.**

Job Descriptions

In conducting our research we noticed that many of the PDRD job descriptions are out of date and need to better reflect actual job requirements. In some cases the job descriptions don't align with job requirements established in adopted Codes.

374. *Recommendation:* **PDRD should review and up-date all job descriptions.**

Pay and Classification

We received numerous complaints in the employee surveys indicating that salaries for similar functions or requirements are not consistent. Given Austin's extensive regulations, it takes a considerable amount of time and training before a new employee is successful. As such it is important that PDRD has competitive wages and low turnover. The last City pay and classification study was done in 2007. Some of the changes were implemented in 2008, others in 2011. Given all the pending changes in PDRD, it would be appropriate for an up-dated study.

375. *Recommendation:* **Update the pay and classification study for PDRD.**

Performance Measures

The City uses an extensive Performance Measurement System that is tied to the annual budget. While this is the most extensive system we have seen in our various studies, many of the measures being used for PDRD need to be improved. These are discussed in various parts of this report. Chapter III includes an extensive discussion of performance measures.

To promote good communication and enhance employee morale it is essential that employees have a clear understanding of the performance they are expected to achieve. Establishing specific job performance standards for each position in the Department will provide a sound basis for future performance evaluations and may help eliminate some of the favoritism that some employees perceive exists currently within the Department.

376. *Recommendation:* Supervisors should work with staff and HR to develop performance standards for each position in the Department.

Probation Periods

The Department uses a standard six month probationary period. One issue that needs further attention is the enforcement of certification requirements for some positions during probation.

377. *Recommendation:* PDRD HR function should review how certification requirements are handled during probation periods.

Retirements

While there is no totally accurate way to determine retirements, the department has many long term employees and this could be an area of concern. Based on age and years of service, the PDRD HR staff calculated that 47 employees could be eligible in one-year, another 16 in three years and another 33 within 5 years. Should all retire it would impact roughly a third of the organization. Even during the course of this study, a number of supervisors indicated they were in the midst of retirement and the organization was scrambling to make the transition. This problem is accentuated in that the City has a history of slowness in filling vacant positions.

Managers and supervisors in PDRD should develop transition plans for both turnover and retirements. The Department should also work with HR to develop a program where new hires or appointments can be on board for a number of months prior to the actual turnover.

378. *Recommendation:* Managers and supervisors in PDRD should develop transition plans for both turnover and retirements.

379. ***Recommendation:*** The City HR Department should develop a program where new hires or appointments can be on board for a number of months prior to a position turnover.

Staff Turnover

Staff turnover can have a very important negative effect on the operations of departments and functions. The City's Human Resource Department does not normally keep this kind of data, however, the PDRD HR staff did develop the three year data shown in Table 77. Recently, at the request of the City Council the HR Department also developed some citywide data but not at the same level of detail. In a good economy, many organization today experience more staff turnover than in the past. We consider turnover less than 10% a year within an expected range, however anything over 10% would be areas of concern and could have a substantial impact on division productivity. The table indicates several areas of concern including:

- **Comprehensive Planning** had two years of very high turnover rates. Over three years 8 of the 21 positions turned over which is 38% of the staff. Fortunately, in spite of this they were able to complete the Comprehensive Plan
- **Residential Review** had very high turnover in 2011-12 at 23%. Over the three years 6 positions turned over vs the current 21 or 29% turnover.
- **Permit Center** has tended to have high turnover, particularly in 2010-11. Over the three years four of the 14 positions or 29% turned over.
- **Budget & Finance** had a very high turnover in 2011-12. Over the three years three of the 10 positions turned over for 30%.

The other divisions have been relatively stable. National studies show that some employees leave for greater pay, others for retirement and finally many leave because they do not like the organization or their boss. Other sections of this report including the employee questionnaires, interviews and surveys indicates a high degree of low employee morale and dissatisfaction with management and supervision within PDRD. This should be of concern to the organization.

Table 77
PDRD Staff Turnover Data, Percentages

Division	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13
Office of Director	0.00	0.00	6.67
Comprehensive Planning	14.29	22.22	5.56
Current Planning	7.14	6.67	0.00
Site & Subdivision Inspections	11.11	0.00	0.00
Development Assistance Center	0.00	12.50	0.00
Land Use Review	5.17	12.28	5.17
Residential Review	6.25	23.08	9.52
Site & Subdivision Inspection	0.00	6.25	3.23
Building Inspection	2.08	2.04	3.85
Commercial Plan Review	0.00	6.67	5.56
Permit Center	15.38	7.69	9.09
Urban Design	0.00	0.00	0.00
Human Resources	0.00	0.00	0.00
Budget & Finance	0.00	28.57	11.11
Overall Average	4.86	8.39	4.22

Staffing for the HR Function

When PDRD was created and the One-Stop-Shop was transferred to PDRD from Watershed Protection, one Human Resources Coord. position was transferred from Watershed Protection to PDRD, evidently with the understanding that Watershed Protection would provide other needed human resource staff as necessary. However, it appears that this has not transpired. The HR function has also had the benefit of a Corporate Performance Consultant from City HR who has been spending roughly 75% time for PDRD. However, with the implementation of the new Civil Service Rules, this time has been reduced to 25%. As such, there has been a shortage of staff for PDRD's HR function. PDRD HR needs are being addressed through the addition

of a HR Advisor and a HR Specialist position that has recently been filled. We feel that both positions are needed and appropriate.

F. TRAINING

Overall: There has been virtually a total lack of internal training throughout PDRD for a variety of reasons including lack of resources and supervisors and managers not understanding that this is their responsibility. We normally recommend that a target for training be 2% of the personnel budget and 5% of employee's time. We arrived at Table 78 based on the budget for 2013-14. It is not clear which categories can actually be considered training but we have been generous in the categories listed in the Table. The percentages range from a low of zero for several functions and a high of 0.8% for Urban Design for a total expenditure of \$90,243. However, 2% of the Personnel Budget of \$20,030,569 would be \$400,611. A more detailed analysis of these categories Division or Section by Section would be required to arrive at the best budget. The various supervisors and managers should take the lead in this effort. However, pending that analysis we recommend an additional \$175,000 be added to the PDRD training budgets.

380. *Recommendation:* Add an initial \$175,000 to budget items related to training.

381. *Recommendation:* As part of the budget plans for 2015-16 PDRD should conduct a detailed review of training related budgets Division by Division or Section by Section.

Table 78
PDRD Training Budgets 2013-14

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K
Function	Pers. Bud	6531 Sem. Fees	6532 Educ Trv.	6558 Prof Reg	6632 Mem.	6633 Sub.	7486 Bks Lib.	Total C to H	Column I as % of B	7580 Soft.
Neigh PI	1,695,050	3,500	3,400		700	500	100	8,200	0.48%	3,000
Zon. Case Mgt	944,626	2,725	2,525	0	700	500	200	6,650	0.70%	0
Annex	181,233	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00%	0
Neig Asst.	200,846	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00%	0
Code Amed	101,156	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00%	0
Urb. Design	820,072	2,500	1,755	1,000	1,300	0	0	6,555	0.80%	500
Lnd Use	5,413,871	16,480	5400	3,640	1880	1050	4,200	32,650	0.60%	3,750
Bld. Plan Rev	1,573,477	2,160	0	250	75	0	2,000	4,485	0.29%	800
Zon. Rev.	1,466,700	0	0	0	500	0	1,000	1,500	0.10%	0
Sit/Sub Ins	3,295,763	3,226	0	625	755	92	2,210	6,908	0.21%	568
Res. Bld.	1,926,189	2,160	0	4,885	400	250	6,000	13,695	0.71%	3,087
Comm. Bldg	2,411,586	3,000	0	2,200	650	250	3,500	9,600	0.40%	1,948
Total	20,030,569	35,751	13,080	12,600	6,960	2,642	19,210	90,243	0.45%	13,653

A new Training section was created in June of 2014. The section will focus on:

- Increasing knowledge and expertise of both new and existing staff and reducing incorrect code determinations;
- Increasing cross-division understanding of the development review and inspection process;
- Improved customer service; and
- Documentation of departmental policies and procedures.

The function will have the services of three staff. We are very supportive of this approach.

Supervisor and Manager Training

PDRD is in great need to improve its supervisors and managers.

The City has a supervisor and management academy available to the department. This academy could be of major use to the Department. PDRD's use of this function is shown in Table 79. While a number of supervisors have used the function, the number of managers is very low.

382. Recommendation: PDRD should increase its use of the supervisors and managers academy.

Table 79
Supervisor and Management Academy PDRD Attendance

Year	Supervisors Academy	Management Academy
2010	8	0
2011	15	0
2012	11	0
2013	14	0
2014	12	4

Although we are supportive of the Supervisor and Management Academy, this type of program is often too generic for specific manager and supervisor issues of the type we have seen in PDRD. As such, we suggest that all managers and supervisors in PDRD undergo what is called a 360 degree evaluation. These evaluations include feedback from peers, supervisors, and employees of the manager being evaluated. The managers should have the evaluation first to be followed by supervisors. If the City HR Department is not equipped to conduct these evaluations, an outside consultant that specializes in these evaluations should be hired.

383. *Recommendation:* Conduct a 360 degree evaluation for all PDRD managers and supervisors.

G. PIO/CUSTOMER SERVICE

Logo/Branding

There is a need to solidify the image of PDRD and to set the stage for a revitalized department. There also continues to be confusion as to the meaning of One-Stop-Shop.

384. *Recommendation:* Hire a consultant to create a logo and branding for PDRD.

Public Information Requests

A Research Analyst Sr. handles a variety of external requests including:

- **CAFs (citizen requests)**
Staff coordinated 210 requests in 2013 and 95 through October in 2014 and distributes to various PDRD Divisions for response. These requests are submitted by the City Manager's Office or Council Members in response to citizen requests for assistance or information.
- **CIURs (Council Requests)**
Staff coordinated 65 Council Requests in 2013 and 36 through October in 2014. These are City Council requests and we were surprised that this number was not higher as staff feels they get too many requests. On the other hand, some of these requests require considerable work for a response. Requests are distributed to the various PDRD Divisions for response.
- **PIRs (public information requests)**
Staff coordinated 2,557 requests in 2013 and 2,768 requests through October in 2014. These requests are distributed to the various PDRD Divisions for response. Public information requests are established by State Law.

For 2013 this function resulted in handling 2,832 requests or 11 per day. The function also handles some training in these functions for other Divisions.

Receptionist Function

An Administrative Assistant is assigned to handle the reception function on the 5th floor. This position also distributes mail, handles schedules for a variety of conference rooms and other functions as may be required. There is a standard operating procedure (SOP) for this function that was adopted in September 2011. The SOP sets forth duties and procedures, particularly as related to desk coverage when the Administrative Assistant is away from the desk.

When this position turned over, there was a temporary supervisor and apparent confusion in relation to duties. It appears that the SOP was not used in this transition. This is typical of what we have found in many parts of PDRD where useful SOPs have been created but they are not used and in many cases not even well known. One of the key issues for the receptionist function appears to be getting appropriate back-up as needed.

385. *Recommendation:* The Public Information Specialist and the Administrative Assistant should review and up-date as appropriate the 2011 SOP for the receptionist function. As part of this review any issue related to back-up should be addressed.

The door from the reception area to the 5th floor offices has a security feature where employees use their card for entrance. However, the receptionist must get up from the desk to provide access for customers. A simple solution for this would be to locate a button on the receptionist desk to open the door lock.

386. *Recommendation: A button should be added to the receptionist desk to open the door to the 5th floor offices.*

Rules

Specific Rules for PDRD are processed by a Records Analyst. There have been 10 to 12 of these per year. The overall Rules process is discussed in another section.

Staffing

As identified throughout this report there are major needs for PDRD to improve communication both internally and externally. There is also need for improvements to the website. The exact staffing needs for these two functions are not clear. We suggest that initially one Public Information Specialist be added and as work progresses, any additional needs be carefully documented.

387. *Recommendation: Add one Public Information Specialist.*

Telephones

Two Customer Service Reps handle the main PDRD phone lines. The City has installed a new phone system which has improved service. We tested this line and our calls were picked up in two rings which is excellent. If lines are busy there is also a call back system where you can leave your number and obtain a call back. This function also handles incoming calls for Austin Energy but the statistics do not show this function.

We requested statistics for the phone lines as shown in Table 80. This includes all the calls process by the phone group. The system does not include any direct dial calls to individual extensions.

These statistics match the extensive comments we received from Stakeholders concerning PDRDs lack of returning phone calls. The numbers are so bad that PDRD should be embarrassed.

- 7 of the 10 Divisions never answered any calls;
- Of the 3 Divisions that did answer calls, only one of them exceeded 50%; and
- 28% of the callers simply abandoned the call.

To make matters even worse, we have no statistics on how many voice mail calls were answered or how many calls to direct lines were answered. However, based on Stakeholder input, we doubt that the performance is much better.

Solving this problem will take some detailed analysis and changing systems within each Division. The first step will be to see if the Division managers even feel that the problem needs to be addressed.

388. *Recommendation:* PDRD should undertake a detailed analysis of the phone issues, Division by Division with the goal of having at least 75% of calls answered.

Table 80
August 2014 Phone Breakdown

Function	All Calls	Answered Calls	Voice Mail	Abandoned Calls
Commercial Plan Review	250	56 (22%)	179	24
Comprehensive Planning	2	0	2	0
Current Planning	7	4 (57%)	3	0
Development Assistance Center	128	0	87	41
Inspections	1813	621 (34%)	798	394
Land Use Review	22	0	18	4
Permits	834	0	539	305
Res Plan Review	279	0	101	178
Spanish Line	32	0	25	7
	3367	681 (20%)	1752 (52%)	953 (28%)

In Chapter III of this report we also have a policy that requires all phone calls, voice mails, and emails to be returned the same day received.

Website

The website is an important part of PDRDs customer service and public outreach. Two years ago the City re-designed the website. While some improvements were made, we received major criticism of the site from both Stakeholders and staff. PDRDs coordination of the website is located in the Neighborhood Assistance section.

389. ***Recommendation:*** Hire one public information specialist who will maintain the website on a full time basis and design educational materials. They will report to the Public Information and Marketing Manager.

H. RULES

Policy

The approach to the Rules was adopted by the City Council, Ordinance No. 880128-Q, adopted February 28, 1988. A Rule was described as follows:

“Rule means any statement of general applicability that implements, interprets, or prescribes the provision of this Land Development Code, or describes the procedural or practice requirements of a department in its administration of this Land Development Code, including the amendment or repeal of a prior rule. A statement concerning only internal management or organization of a department is not a “rule” for purposes of this Land Development Code.”

The Rules are intended to afford minimum standards of uniform practice and procedures in the administration of the Land Development Code, provide appropriate public participation in the rulemaking process, and provide adequate public notice of rules proposed and adopted by City departments.

Rules are established under Chapter 1-2 of the City Code. The authority to regulate construction requirements is established in Section 25-6-267 and 268 of the City Code. A department may adopt rules to implement, administer, enforce, or comply with the Code, an ordinance, or another law for which the department is responsible. A rule is not valid unless adopted in substantial compliance with Chapter 1-2. The

Rules (Technical Manuals) were adopted at the same time as the Land Development Code since part of the Code became the manuals. Prior to this there were individual codes, separate from each other, all with separate requirements for notification, etc.

There is confusion related to checklists and forms. Some believe that if they are to be changed they need to go through the Rules process. Others feel this is not the case. We have been unable to find documentation of legal support for either approach. In any case, applications now go through the Rules process. This is very awkward and we have never seen this in other communities. We think that individual functions need to be able to change checklists and forms without going through the Rules process.

390. *Recommendation: Proceed to change checklists and forms without going through the Rules process.*

Process

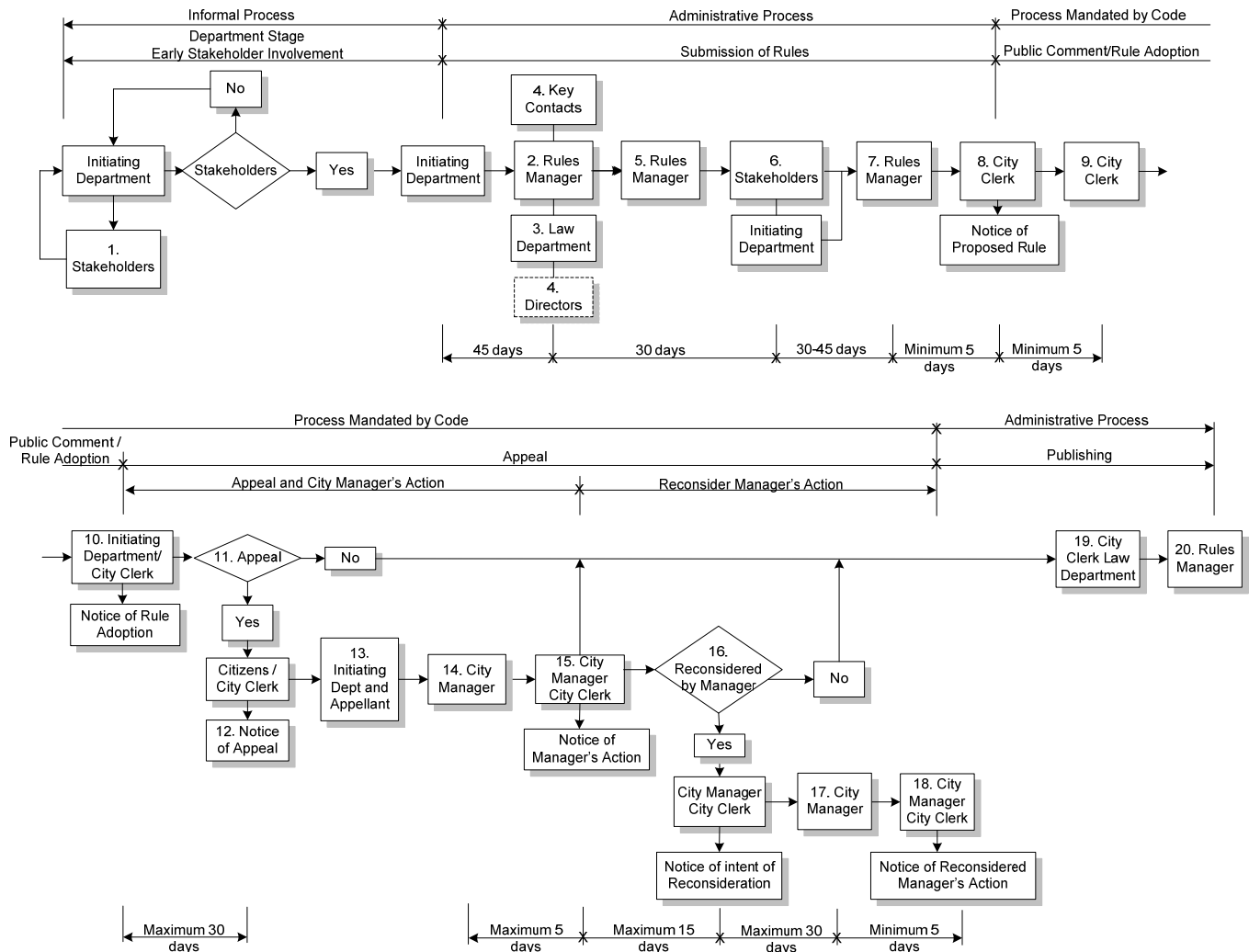
The Rules process is shown in Figure 41. The following text corresponds to the numbers in boxes on the Figure. However, as noted in the text, the actual practice does not always match the Figure.

1. The initiating department meets with Stakeholders to discuss proposed rules and to resolve major conflicts/concerns.
2. The Department initiating rules change submits material to Rules Manager for distribution and City review.
3. The Rule must be reviewed by the City Attorney and found to be within the department's authority to adopt.
4. The initiating Department attempts to resolve any conflicts and the Rules Manager must receive sign-offs from Key Contacts and the Law Department. If necessary the directors step in to resolve conflicts.
5. Once the City review is final, Rules Manager sends out materials to Stakeholders which reflects the City's unified position. The public shall be provided a period of no less than 30 days to comment. *However, Stakeholders are informed of the rule prior to the submission of the rules. A department may or may not contact the stakeholders depending if there were revisions by city staff.*
6. The initiating department and Rules Manager meet with Stakeholders to do a final review. *However, this does not happen and is not the process. The stakeholders can review the rule during the comment period and if they have questions may contact the department.*

7. Rules Manager coordinates the rule promulgation with the City Clerk and the initiating department. Initiating department must have all signatures, except City Clerk's in place.
8. Posting materials are received by the City Clerk and Notice of Proposed Rule is posted within one day of filing on the central bulletin board at City Hall. The notice shall include a brief explanation of the rule, an explanation of the particular Land Development Code provision, and shall request public comments on the proposed rule. A meeting of Stakeholders is often conducted. *However, staff does not normally meet with the stakeholders again.*
9. City Clerk notifies Rules Manager and initiating department of any public comments received.
10. Notice of Rule Adoption is filed with the City Clerk and posted within one day of filing. There is an automatic withdrawal of the rule if initiating departments fails to adopt the rule within maximum ninety days after posting the Notice of Proposed Rules.
11. An appeal of the adopted rule is filed with City Clerk, and forwarded to City Manager, City Council, and initiating department. Any person may appeal the adoption of a rule to the City Manager no later than 30 days after the adoption was posted.
12. The Notice of Appeal is posted within one day and the rule is suspended pending disposition of the appeal.
13. The initiating department and Rule Manager are informed of appeal and meet with appellant and stakeholders to resolve issues.
14. The City Manager acts on the appeal. If there is no action by the City Manager, the rule is withdrawn. The City Manager may modify, affirm or withdraw the adopted rule.
15. The Notice of City Manager's Action is filed with City Clerk and City Council and posted within one day by City Clerk.
16. If the City Manager decides to reconsider the intent is filed with the City Clerk and City Council and there is a Notice of Intent of Reconsideration posted within one day by the City Clerk.
17. The City Managers action is reconsidered.
18. The reconsidered Manager's action if filed with the City Clerk and City Council and the Notice of Reconsidered Manager's Action is posted within one day by City Clerk.
19. If the Rule is adopted a signed copy is sent by the City Clerk to the Rules Manager, City Attorney, and initiating department.

20. The Rules Manager processes the adopted rule changes for incorporation into Criteria Manuals and Application Packets. *However, some application packets do not go into the criteria manual and we agree not having them in the Manuals.*

Figure 41
Rules Process



Notes on the Process

According to staff, the informal process related to Rules includes:

A. 10 Departments are involved in the Rules including:

1. Austin Energy
2. Austin Water
3. Fire

4. Health
 5. Neighborhood Housing
 6. Parks
 7. Planning and Development
 8. Public Works
 9. Transportation
 10. Watershed
- B. All 10 departments must agree to a rule before it is adopted as per Ordinance 880128-Q. It was also indicated that some departments have proceeded with standards outside the rules such as at Public Works and Transportation and evidently allowed by the ACM and City Council. It appears that this has upset some development engineers in other departments. The process is designed to allow all departments to have input with a final decision by an Assistant City Manager. If the process is not followed, it leads to inconsistency of interpretations which has been a concern of stakeholders.
- C. There is a rule posting cycle for each quarter.
- D. New rules are due to the coordinator at least a week in advance of the start of the quarter.
- E. The rule must be sent to Neighborhood Housing and Community Development Department (NHCD) for the preparation of an Affordable Impact Statement.
- F. There are eight, roughly 3 inch thick binders that include the adopted rules under these topics:
1. Building Criteria
 2. Drainage
 3. Fire
 4. Standards (ROW Const. Stan.)
 5. Standard Specs
 6. Traditional Neighborhood District
 7. Transportation
 8. Utilities

The notes described above should be incorporated into an SOP for the Rules process. Additionally, we understand that an effort is underway to computerize the process which we are highly supportive of.

391. *Recommendation:* A formal SOP should be developed for the Rules process. This SOP should require all departments to comply with adopted rules.

Well the posting of the Rules is in the adopted City Code, this type of posting tends to not be effective. The computerization of the Rules and the adoption of an SOP should include email notices to Stakeholders and participants throughout the process.

392. *Recommendations:* The Rules positing should be supplemented by an automatic emailing of notices to all Stakeholders and participants.

The timelines shown on Figure 41 can result in a very long process. Some of these are set in the City Code (not Land Development Code) and would need to be adjusted. Others may be more by practice. As a general rule we suggest timelines be changed as follows: 45 days be reduced to 30; 30 days be reduced to 20; and 15 days be reduced to 10.

393. *Recommendation:* The timelines for the Rules process should be reduced.

Each department is currently responsible to provide their own Stakeholder list. However, it is possible that additional Stakeholders may be interested in the issue. Additional clarification of this issue should be included in the proposed new SOP.

394. *Recommendation:* The Stakeholders should be clarified in the proposed new SOP.

Staffing

A one person staff, Bsns Proc Spec, handles the rules process. The position reports to the PDRD Chief Administrative Officer. Since the rules apply to many City departments it has been suggested that the position should report to an Assistant City Manager. However, the focus of this report and PDRD is to provide increased coordination of these departments by the Planning and Development Department. As such, we believe the function should remain in the Planning and Development

Department. Additionally, this is the type of detail that we normally believe should be handled at a lower level than an Assistant City Manager. Should staff have problems coordinating with one of the departments, they could still ask the City Manager for assistance.

Once the organization of the two new departments is completed, it may be useful to revisit the appropriate location for this function.

